



DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov



Allegan County's Project: Resource (above): In three weeks' time a local church family collected almost 120 duffel bags to help foster parents and children have the necessary supplies to make it through the first five days in foster care. They stocked the DHS county vehicles with nine safe child seats and provided toys and games for children and parents to use during visitation hours. Calvary Baptist will touch the hearts of the children and the hearts of the DHS social workers who have committed their lives to protecting children.

Church supplies Allegan DHS with resources for foster children

Congregation also honored Allegan County CPS and foster care staff on Civil Service Sunday

From Susan Bailey-Carman, Director

Allegan County Department of Human Services

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HOLLAND—May was not only Foster Care Month in Michigan; the last Sunday of the month was also celebrated as Civil Service Sunday by members at Holland's Calvary Baptist Church. For the last six years the congregation has used this special Sunday to honor elected officials, police officers, fire fighters, and judges. This year the congregation and Pastor Mark Vroegop decided that Children's Protective Services and Foster Care staffs with the Allegan County DHS should be recognized for the vital role they play in the protection and well being of children in their community.

Pastor Vroegop and his wife are licensed foster parents with the Allegan County DHS and wrote that, "We have personally observed the real sense of calling that you have to your profession, and we also realize that it is not very often that someone simply says, 'Thank you'."

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Church supplies Allegan DHS with resources for foster children

Church members also embraced a project in which they supplied the Allegan County DHS with 120 duffle bags filled with clothing (sizes 0–3 months through size 14) and supplies for the first week when a child is placed in a foster home. The church family not only purchased the new bags and their contents, but they also provided new infant and toddler car seats, a high chair for the DHS office visitation room, 35 packages of diapers and 9 large packages of baby wipes, toys, games, and beautiful quilts and blankets.

I was a guest at the church's two services on May 27, where I briefly addressed the challenges of abuse and neglect and poverty in families. Pastor Vroegop's sermons were, fittingly, about social justice; and he read from a letter written by a former Allegan County foster child who is now a husband, father, and member of the Calvary Baptist Church.



The staff at Allegan County DHS.



June 20 was World Refugee Day, to focus attention on the plight of refugees and displaced persons around the world. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees says there are 40 million people worldwide uprooted by violence and persecution. War, injustice, exclusion, environmental pressures, and competition for scarce resources are among the devastating problems that may force people from their homes and homeland. The DHS Refugee Assistance Program, under leadership of Al Horn, provides services to refugees that come to Michigan from far corners of the world. Working in partnership with the voluntary resettlement agencies (VOLAG), program staff write grant applications, evaluates bids, monitor contracts, and oversee programs that serve refugees. Program staff recently designed the display above to tell success stories and to highlight our partnership with VOLAG in the state. The board was on display in Lansing's Grand Tower Building lobby June 20. It will be displayed at the biannual Michigan Council on Refugee Resettlement conferences and at other refugee and immigrant events that may be held around the state.

-- from Pat Weaver

The W.J. Maxey School's "My Soldier" project guests of honor, Leonard Sims and wife, right, were recipients of wooden deck chairs made in the building trades class.



Maxey Boys Training School "My Soldier" Project

From Derek Hitchcock, Director

W.J. Maxey Boys Training School Director, Whitmore Lake

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Youths at the W. J. Maxey Boys Training School's new community transition group kicked off the "My Soldier" project May 25, a restorative justice activity where youths raise funds to create "care" packages for Michigan soldiers serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. The project started when an individual youth found a magazine advertisement and lobbied his treatment group and social worker to participate. Under the coordination of social worker **Sharon Byles** and **Jeff Bimer**, residents held a variety show, silent auction and summer luncheon for Maxey staff members, DHS staff and visitors. The variety show had a patriotic theme and contained music, poetry and theatrical skits dedicated to current soldiers and armed forces veterans. The event was extremely successful and raised more than \$1,200 to fund the project.

The guest of honor for the event was Leonard Sims, a recent victim of street violence as well as a World War II veteran. At age 91, he was able to participate in the event and praised Maxey youths for their talents and efforts. The Maxey Student Council awarded Mr. Sims and his wife a set of beautiful wooden deck chairs made in their building trades class. Mrs. Sims was in tears as she thanked the youths and staff and exclaimed how good it was to see youth with troubled pasts demonstrate compassion for her husband and her. The \$1,200 was used to purchase gifts, hygiene and sundry items for inclusion in the care packages. Maxey youths are writing letters of thanks and encouragement which will be sent, with the care packages, to 28 Michigan soldiers stationed overseas.

Restorative justice activities are treatment interventions where youths donate their time and effort to help others in the community. Youths benefit from developing compassion and empathy as well as building their self-esteem. A special thanks to all the Maxey staff members who contributed to making this event a success. Future events will be planned to carry the "My Soldier" program forward and positively impact the lives of our soldiers in the Middle East.

Oakland County's Pam Mack at it again ***Oakland County staffer rewarded by local partners***

Lynn Contreras, Community Resource Coordinator
DHS-Oakland County, Bloomfield Hills

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On June 12 **Pam Mack**, eligibility specialist at the Oakland County Saginaw District, was honored by the Nurse-Family Partnership, an Oakland County Health Division group of nurses that partner with our Saginaw District. Pam was presented a certificate of appreciation for her dedication and support of the Nurse-Family Partnership Initiative.

During the past three years, Pam added the clients of this initiative to her holiday toy drive and purchased and donated items year round – Halloween costumes, baby clothes, maternity wear and more – for the mothers and infants in the program. The nurses work with our clients who are pregnant for the first time. They work with them from early pregnancy until the child is age three. In addition to helping with the physical pregnancy, they provide emotional support with any issue that may act as a barrier to a healthy outcome of the pregnancy and being a good mom.

As Pam said, "It acts as a really early Head Start program."

In addition, she advocated for clients through community groups, including the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and encouraged them to do fundraising and collect needed items on behalf of these clients. At the presentation, the nurses thanked her for her dedication to the project from its inception and her commitment to helping new moms and their babies get a great start in life.

Congratulations Pam for demonstrating excellence in customer service!

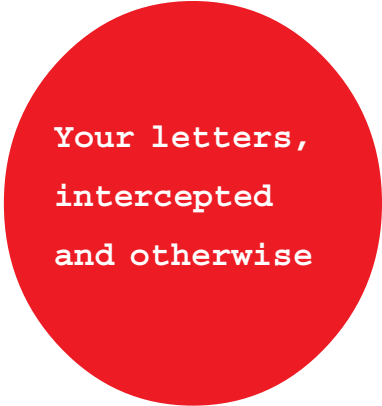
Date: July 12
To: DHS Matters!
Subj: Leila Frangie

Many times over, Leila Frangie has earned a spot on the department's unsung heroes list. She epitomizes all the qualities that make a personnel office successful by coupling technical expertise with a customer friendly approach. As a result, she has earned the respect of any who have partnered with her in personnel matters. It's a morale booster to interact with Leila because she expresses a strong loyalty to DHS and its employees.

Musette A. Michael, Executive Director

Michigan Community Service Commission, Lansing

■ Leila Frangie is a personnel management analyst with DHS Personnel in Lansing. Michigan Community Service Commission is administered through DHS; for more information go to <http://www.michigan.gov/mcsc>



**Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise**

Date: June 28
To: Margaret Warner, Director
DHS-Oakland County
Subj: Giving credit where due

I am writing to give credit where credit is due. First, I would like to thank you for taking such timely and accurate care of the problem I was having with a consumer (model payment) in my home back in February 2007. It has been nice to not have to take so much time and frustration trying to receive the money for services provided each month. I want to say thank you very much.

Also, I would like to say that a worker named Mrs. (**Judith Lamb**) has been just great in more than one incident. She has always answered the phone and given much help where it was needed. I really appreciate you two women. Again, I say thank you and God bless you both.

Doreen Breakie

Ortonville

■ Judith Lamb is an eligibility specialist at Oakland County District IV-Saginaw Street office. The letter writer is an adult foster care provider.

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
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